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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7540  
INFO RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 002473

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR EAP, PM, AND EAP/MTS  
USPACOM ALSO FOR J5  
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP (TOOLAN/REDMON)  
JOINT STAFF/J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/CLEMMONS)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [RP](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ARROYO FORMALLY LAUNCHES NEW  
ANTI-TERRORISM LAW

REF: A. MANILA 2284  
[1](#)B. MANILA 752  
[1](#)C. MANILA 599  
[1](#)D. MANILA 560  
[1](#)E. MANILA 465

[1](#)1. (U) In a gala televised event July 20 attended by leading Cabinet and Congressional figures, members of the diplomatic corps, police and army officers, and victims of terrorism and their families, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo formally launched the Philippines' new anti-terrorism law, Republic Act no. 9372, the Human Security Act of 2007. Ambassador Kenney and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, U.A.E. Ambassador Al-Jowaid, joined President Arroyo in making remarks.

[1](#)2. (U) In her speech, President Arroyo said the new law, while preserving and protecting freedom, would give the Philippine government "legal muscle to end the paralysis of fear" created by the brutal terrorist acts that have plagued the country. She asserted that the Act would help put a stop to human rights abuses, saying that "we can't fight terrorism with terror." Stating that "no one was above the law," Arroyo said she was determined to stop anyone who killed innocent civilians, whether they were religious or ideological terrorists, or "rogue elements" of the police or military. Arroyo concluded by noting that poverty abetted terrorism and that economic and social development were the best ways to achieve security. She appealed to the Philippine public to give the new Human Security Act "a chance."

[1](#)3. (SBU) COMMENT: The Act, which President Arroyo signed March 6, provided for implementation beginning July 15, after mid-term elections. There has been intense public (and predictable) criticism from the legal Left, who are vowing to challenge the new law in the courts. Despite some flaws, the Human Security Act represents a substantial achievement for President Arroyo and her Administration. We are encouraged, as well, by her strong public stand on unlawful killings and stated commitment to bring rogue elements of the police and military to justice.

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